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ENG 3702-001: American Literature: Mid-19th Century to 1900

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American Literature: Mid-19th Century to 1900 (Writing Intensive)

English 3702-001

Fall 2013

Purpose

The course offers a literary-historical study of works associated with the development of American Realism, a literary movement that especially flourished from 1865 to 1900 and that continues to this day. We will examine ways in which writers including Dickinson, Twain, Howells, James, and Chopin sought to represent reality. In addition, we will consider how social and intellectual changes influenced the writers' literary techniques and concepts of reality. You will have the opportunity to read a wide range of outstanding works reflecting economic, racial, gender and other issues as our nation transitioned from a predominantly agrarian to a predominantly urban society.

Scope

Because the American Realists excelled at writing stories and novels, most of the works fit into those genres. But there is plenty of variety. Realism is by no means a monochromatic movement. It includes the Realism of local color, the Realism of social criticism, the Realism of psychological analysis, the Realism of biological and economic determinism, and even the Realism of gothic horror.

Your final grade will be based on the following components:

Class Participation: 10%

Your informed responses and discussion show active engagement with the works and contribute to classroom learning.

Written Responses: 30%

During the semester, you will write five written responses (at least 400-500 words each, but you can write up to 800 words) focusing on questions I will pose in class. In each response, you will be expected to state a clear position in a main-idea sentence and support that position with evidence and reasoning. Responses will be evaluated for content (clarity and depth of main-idea sentence, sufficiency and coherence of evidence and reasoning) and, to a lesser extent, for grammar and mechanics. A response can receive a failing grade if the composition includes a great number of

drastic sentence errors (fragments, splices, disagreements, dangling modifiers, etc.).

Critical Essay:

45%

You will compose an essay of 8-10 pages (not including endnotes and works cited) in twelve-point type. Essays will be evaluated for content (clarity and depth of thesis, sufficiency and coherence of evidence and reasoning) and, to a lesser extent, for grammar and mechanics. However, an essay can receive a failing grade if the composition includes a great number of drastic sentence errors (fragments, splices, disagreements, dangling modifiers, etc.).

Final Examination:

15%

The final examination will be in two parts. Part I will include four items from which you will choose two items as the basis of 300-400 word responses. Part II will include three items from which you will choose one item as the basis of a 600-800 word response.

Note: When I evaluate written responses, critical essays and final examinations, I use a simple ten-point scale linked to letter grades. That is, an 87% is a B+, an 85% is a B, an 82% is a B-. This approach allows you to compute your grade at any point of the semester.

Attendance Policy/Missed Written Assignments

If you have a verifiable excuse from a doctor, the Health Service, or an appropriate University employee, I will drop missed written responses from your average. I will do the same if you can verify attendance at a family member's wedding or funeral or to assist a sick or injured family member. You cannot make up missed written responses. After three unexcused absences, you will incur a penalty of 10% off your final grade; each subsequent unexcused absence will carry a penalty of 5% off your final grade.

Electronic Writing Portfolio

You may submit an essay from this writing-intensive course to your electronic-writing portfolio. Keep in mind that submissions must include at least 750 words.

Information for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

1. Week of August 19
 - Introduction to Course; Literary Historical Background; Handout of Melville Poems
 - Discussion of Poems from Melville's *Battle-Pieces* (handout), Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" (52-56), Dickinson's "I like a look of Agony" (72)
 - Poems by Dickinson: These are the days when Birds come back" (71-72), "The Robin's my Criterion for Tune" (74), "A Bird came down the Walk" (77), "There's a certain slant of light" (73-74), "I died for Beauty—but Was scarce" (80), "I heard a Fly buzz—when I died" (80)
2. Week of August 26
 - Poems by Dickinson: "I like to see it lap the miles" (84), "Some keep the Sabbath Going to Church" (77), "He preached upon 'Breadth' till it argued him narrow—" (91-92), "What Soft—Cherubic Creatures—" (78-79), "Much Madness is divinest Sense—" (79), "Because I Could not stop for Death—" (87)
 - Bret Harte: "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" (502-9); George Washington Cable: "Belles Demoiselles Plantation" (520-32)
3. Week of September 2
 - Labor Day: No Classes**
 - Twain: The Notorious Jumping Frog" (144-51); from *Life on the Mississippi* (154-71);
 - Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (172-209)
 - Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (209-58)
4. Week of September 9
 - Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (258-309)
 - Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (309-44)
 - Daisy Miller* (400-411)
5. Week of September 16
 - James: "Daisy Miller" (411-43)
 - Howells: *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (3-54)
 - The Rise of Silas Lapham* (54-110)
6. Week of September 23
 - The Rise of Silas Lapham* (110-85)
 - The Rise of Silas Lapham* (185-238)
 - The Rise of Silas Lapham* (238-92)
7. Week of September 30
 - The Rise of Silas Lapham* (292-321)

- Jewett: "A White Heron" (552-60); Freeman: "The Revolt of Mother" (649-61)
- Chopin: *The Awakening* (560-97)
- 8. Week of October 7
 - The Awakening* (597-650)
 - Gilman: "The Yellow Wall-Paper" (695-708); Bierce: "The Boarded Window" (517-20)
 - Fall Break: No Classes**
- 9. Week of October 14
 - James, "The Beast in the Jungle" (459-88)
 - Crane (separate book): *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (7-57)
 - Maggie* (58-78); *The Red Badge of Courage* (81-127); **Proposals for Critical Essays Due**
- 10. Week of October 21
 - The Red Badge of Courage* (127-212)
 - "The Blue Hotel" (799-828)
 - London: "To Build a Fire" (823-834); Garland: "Under the Lion's Paw" (685-95);
- 11. Week of October 28
 - Dreiser: *Sister Carrie* (1-68)
 - Sister Carrie* (68-112)
 - Sister Carrie* (112-60)
- 12. Week of November 4
 - Sister Carrie* (160-220)
 - Sister Carrie* (220-70)
 - Sister Carrie* (270-321)
- 13. Week of November 11
 - Sister Carrie* (321-69)
 - Cather: "Neighbor Rosicky" (862-81)
 - Wharton: "The Muses Tragedy" and "Roman Fever" (708-28)
- 14. Week of November 18
 - Crane: *The Black Riders* (1299-1324);
 - "War is Kind" (1325-45)
 - Adams: "The Dynamo and the Virgin" (543-52)

Thanksgiving Break: No Classes

15. Week of December 2

- Robinson: Poems (841-853)

- Frost: Poems (898-907), "Home Burial" (907-910), "The Witch of Coos" (920-23), and "Two Tramps in Mud Time" (924-25)

- Orientation for Final Examination; **Critical Essays Due**